

VID Colloquium

Divergent Paths: The Educational Mobility of Second-generation Turks in Austria, France and Sweden

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A substantial body of literature has investigated educational inequalities among children of Turkish immigrants in single north-western European countries, because Turks are one of the largest immigrant groups and among the most disadvantaged groups in terms of education. Although the patterns of disadvantage are evident in most countries, first comparative studies point to remarkable variations from one country to another in the extent of the disadvantages faced by second-generation Turks. However, neither the precise scale of the differences in educational mobility, nor the reason for the cross-border variations, is at all clear. In my talk I ask what causes variations in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks across three European countries and five cities, namely Sweden (Stockholm), France (Paris and Strasbourg) and Austria (Vienna and Linz)? Using the TIES survey – a data set about children of immigrants from Turkey (as well as from former Yugoslavia and Morocco) collected in 2007/ 2008 – I first study educational mobility in these three contexts in comparison by analyzing both educational attainment and educational pathways.

My findings show that differences are most pronounced in the Austrian education system. They can be seen clearly in France, and they are least pronounced in the Swedish education system. I then proceed to explaining these cross-national differences by investigating interactions between individual and institutional factors that determine the educational mobility process by second-generation Turks. In Austria, the late starting age of pre-schooling, the early segregation into different ability tracks and a half-day teaching system in compulsory education leads to greater interaction with family resources early in their educational career. In contrast, full-day pre-school services and a full-day comprehensive compulsory schooling make family members and their resources less important for second-generation Turks in France. But teachers and peers become crucial for them in the orientation process that determines selection into upper-secondary education. In Sweden, routine full-day schooling, late selection and the high degree of permeability between tracks leads to very few interactions with individual-level factors and makes family resources less relevant in the educational mobility of second-generation Turks. My study highlights that two elements are involved in the mobility process: children of Turkish immigrants, with their own characteristics, family backgrounds, and relationships with important agents such as peers and teachers; and the countries' education systems. But the institutional arrangements of education systems and the way they determine the relevance of individual-level factors, matter more for the outcome of this mobility process. Those systems providing more favourable institutional arrangements make the educational mobility of second-generation Turks less dependent on individual-level factors and resources, thus leading to greater educational achievement.

I close this presentation with an outlook showing how these pronounced educational inequalities for second-generation Turks in Austria shape their labour market position as well as how they translate into divergent patterns of social well-being.

Looking at the social well-being of second-generation Turks (measured as feelings of belonging, out-group trust and individual self-esteem) and examining their interconnection with their socio-economic achievements provides a detailed picture on their objective and subjective processes of 'integration' in Austria

About the presenter

Philipp Schnell is a Post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences, an affiliated researcher at the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies and a lecture at the department of sociology at the University of Vienna and Salzburg. His research interests cover Migration and Ethnicity, Social Inequality, Social Mobility, Urban Studies and Comparative Sociology. Philipp received his PhD from the University of Amsterdam in 2012 and has been a guest researcher at the Institut National D' Études Démographiques in Paris and at the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (University of Amsterdam). He has published on educational achievements by children of immigrants in Europe, ethnic educational inequalities as well as perceptions of belonging and patterns of subjective well-being by immigrant and their descendants in comparative perspective.

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